

March 2, 2015

Joint Committee on Appropriations

Department of Economic and Community Development [DECD]

Legislative Office Building

As President of the Connecticut Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf [CRID], I write on behalf of our membership and on behalf of Deaf citizens throughout the State of Connecticut to voice disappointment with, and objection to proposed State budget cuts and changes to funding for the Arts in Connecticut. Although, the Arts serve as an easy political fiscal target, such cuts actually cut through to the fabric of our Connecticut community and severs the connections between diverse populations that have been forged over years of discovery and interaction.

In “our” own community, Deaf citizens have made remarkable strides and have demonstrated their value to the community in industry and innovation. The National Theater of the Deaf [NTD], the country’s, and the world’s, showcase for “Deaf” imagination, creativity, and invention is one example of how discovery and interaction impact a community in a positive way. Through their “Art”, the National Theater of the Deaf performers and artists, along with artists from other groups showcasing the abilities of unique populations have served to open doors of opportunity and innovation in the “Main Street” marketplace. Many disenfranchised persons, with unique circumstances, have looked to role models at the National Theater and to role models at other groups to fuel their ambition and promote their drive to excel. Many have entered the workforce and have proven to serve exceedingly well after having been so motivated. Consumers of the “Arts” inadvertently learn about special and unique needs from artists from NTD and recognize that perceived

differences are not such major obstacles as initially assumed.
Assimilation into the mainstream is enhanced; the community benefits.

The “Arts” educate while inspiring all; participants, consumers, observers. Cutting the funding to the “Arts” may save a few dollars to the State of Connecticut bureaucracy, but such cuts will lose many lives in the community. Those looking for enlightenment and direction will have no place to generate such ambition. The Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] was established to educate, integrate and enhance the community. Access to the “Arts” has helped to serve to meet those goals. Kindly reconsider and return funding for the “Arts” in the Connecticut State budget; the community needs the “Arts”.

Respectfully,

Keith Vinci, President

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